

III. REMARKS

1. Claims 1-4 are pending in this Application.
2. A telephone conference was held on January 20, 2006 with the Examiner. During that conference Applicant expressed that Paping does not disclose that the franking module or the PDA, which controls the franking module, are connected to the rest of the Paping system (i.e. the centralized computer, data storage, the processor for checking the identification and authorizing the postal transaction or the scanner/reader located at the post office for receiving the mail item and reading the data on the indicia).

The Examiner argued that the PDA is a wireless device that connects to the rest of the system through the "wireless means" (see Paping, ¶ [0023]) and as a result has access to the accounting system or payment server of Paping. The Examiner further referred to Figure 2 of Paping as disclosing network connections between the different system components of Paping.

In response, Applicant replied that the disclosure of Paping does not indicate that the franking module or PDA are connected to the rest of the system and that the mail had to be physically transferred to the scanner/reader at the post office for the indicia to be read. Payment for the postage occurs after scanning the indicia and the financial aspect is transferred to a payment server where the senders account is billed (i.e. bank or credit card) (see Paping, ¶ [0047]). Figure 2 does not show the network connections but rather a flow chart of the processing of the mail item.

In light of the above discussion the Examiner indicated that he would look at Paping again along with the other references in the case and that a response to the Final Office Action should be filed.

3. Claims 1-4 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) over Paping, U.S. Pub. No. 2003/0225711. Claim 1 recites a secure accounting and financial system for providing secure information to the meter, a secure connection between the meter and accounting and financial system providing at least authentication and encryption between the meter and the financial system and accounting. Claim 1 further recites a user interface, remotely coupled to the meter and adapted to allow a user to access the meter functionality with respect to the accounting and financial system. Paping fails to disclose or suggest a secure connection between the meter and accounting and financial system or that the PDA coupled to the meter is adapted to allow a user to access the meter functionality with respect to the accounting and financial system.

Paping discloses at paragraph [0023] that the centralized computer, data storage, and processor is connected by telephone, hardwire, or wireless means to the onsite mail processor which initially receives the mail item and read the data on the indicia. The processor is disclosed as being remote from the meter and preferably centrally located for example at the Post Office (§ [0023]). The processor checks the identification and authorizes the postal transaction (§ [0023]). The onsite mail processor is disclosed as a scanner/reader at the post office which is designed to receive the indicia applied by the franking module (§ [0023]). Nowhere is it disclosed that there is any type of connection between either the franking module or the PDA

and the centralized computer, data storage, processor or the onsite mail processor. Rather, the only "connection" between the franking module/PDA and the rest of the Paping system is the physical transfer of the mail items from the franking module to the scanner/reader located at the Post Office. This physical transfer of mail is not a network connection that would allow the franking module/PDA access to the financial aspect of the Paping system. This is not what is claimed in Applicant's claim 1.

Claim 1 specifically recites a secure connection between the meter and accounting and financial system and a user interface, remotely coupled to the meter and adapted to allow a user to access the meter functionality with respect to the accounting and financial system. The physical transfer of mail from the franking module to the scanner/reader is not a secure connection between the two nor does it allow the PDA access to the payment server of the Paping system. Because the PDA of Paping is only connected to the franking module it does not have access to any financial information "since no accounting data or postage related data are used by the franking module" (§ [0032]). In Paping, the indicia placed on the mail item by the franking module do not include postage (§ [0031]). Postage is paid for after the mail has been scanned at the post office and the financial aspect of the postal transaction is transferred to a payment server (§ [0047]). Payment can be obtained in the same manner as bank or credit card transactions (§ [0047]).

Further, Figure 2 of Paping does not disclose any network connections between the items shown in the Figure. Paragraph [0039] describes Figure 2 and recites:

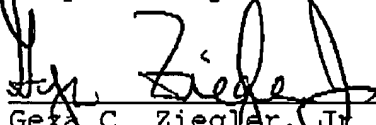
Mail items 3 processed in franking module 1 and marked with identification data, as described above, are presented to a scanner or reader 4 at a post office location. The mail item 3 could also be scanned at a remote scanner 5 located at a postal kiosk similar in structure to an ATM. Data, scanned in readers 4 or 5, are sent by cable, fiber optics, wireless communication or similar connection means to a central postal computer server 6. At this point in the process postage has yet to be applied to the mail item. Server 6 has access to customer information data base 7 which contains listings of customer identification data and authentication codes. By comparison of the identification data received from the scanned mail item to the data from the customer information data base 7, authorized use of the franking module 1 can be verified. Once accepted, server 6 initiates the calculation of the postage due and applies it to the customer's account.

As can be clearly seen from this passage, Figure 2 merely discloses a flow diagram of the mailing process. This is further evidenced in that the mail item (3) is noted in Figure 2 as a separate item and if Figure 2 disclosed network connections there would be a network connection between the franking module and the mail item, which is not the case in Paping. In Paping the mail item is physically transported from the franking module (1) to the scanner (4) ([0039] and [0046]). Therefore claim 1 is patentable over Paping. Claims 2-4 are patentable by reason of their respective dependencies.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record, and are in proper form for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issues remain, the Examiner is invited to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of \$120.00 for a one-month extension of time and any fees associated with this communication or credit any over payment to Deposit Account No. 16-1350.

Respectfully submitted,


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23 JAN 2006
Date

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